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## Educational Writings

### REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

*Mental measurements.*—The first report has recently appeared of a survey<sup>1</sup> which was begun in 1915 in a public school in the congested Jewish district of New York City. A series of tests were given to six hundred children, fifty of each sex of each age from eight to thirteen inclusive. The children were so selected as to represent fairly their respective age groups in school progress. To these children were given nineteen individual tests, drawn from the experiments of Dr. Healy, Mrs. Wooley, and others, and eleven tests of the Binet Scale. A study was also made of the home conditions of the children by personal visitation, and they were given physical tests.

The present report gives the raw data from the mental and physical tests in very elaborate statistical form, gives results of the social study in more summary form, and presents a maturity scale for boys made up of seven mental tests, and one for girls composed of six mental tests. Comment on the scale may be made in the words of the authors: "The tests which are left in the scale are naturally limited by the tests which were originally selected for experimentation and had other and better tests been chosen in the first place, better tests would appear in the scales. The Maturity Scale is *primarily a contribution in method of constructing a series of tests and only secondarily a device for practical use.*" (Italics the reviewer's.) The statistical methods constitute a contribution to the construction of tests (though the procedure of a straight-line growth curve for some of the tests is seriously open to question), but their presentation is appropriate for a technical monograph, not for an expensive book intended for general use. Furthermore, it is questionable whether the present statistical formulation is evidence of the value of the scales, without the application of the scale in its present form to considerable groups of children and the formulation of the results to show distribution, age progress, and correlations, to warrant its publication in the final form in which it now appears. The same criticism, to be sure, applies to other recent tests with even greater force. The criticism of the present report is made partly on account of its very excellence. This consists in the careful statistical procedure. But the reviewer feels this

<sup>1</sup> EVELYN DEWEY, EMILY CHILD, and BEARDSLEY RUMML, *Methods and Results of Testing School Children. Manual of Tests Used by the Psychological Survey in the Public Schools of New York City, Including Social and Physical Studies of the Children Tested.* New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1920. Pp. xii+176. \$5.00.

procedure to be out of place in three ways: first, a more satisfactory preliminary selection could have been made by less elaborate methods; second, the elaborate report should contain results from the application of the scales; and third, the distinction should be made between a technical report of the entire procedure for specially trained readers and a simpler report of the application and results of the final scales for teachers and administrators.

FRANK N. FREEMAN

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*The Smith-Towner Bill.*—Under a general title<sup>1</sup> two writers who have been closely connected with the drafting of the Smith-Towner Bill have brought together two types of material. First, they have presented a sketchy historical survey of all the different grants of land and money which the federal government has made to education. Secondly, they have reviewed in a series of chapters the educational needs of which the nation has become aware as a result of the war and for which our present organization and our ordinary resources do not seem to be adequate. In this connection a brief summary is given of the bills now before Congress aiming to meet these needs.

The two lines of discussion thus developed are focused in the conclusion on the Smith-Towner Bill, which is advocated as the only comprehensive solution of current educational problems.

The history of federal subventions leads the authors of this book to the position that such subventions have served in a large way to stimulate the states to develop systems which are in no wise dominated by federal authority.

The conclusion of this part of the book is summarized in the following paragraph:

The precedents, *undisturbed by a single adverse court decision*, prove that it is constitutional for the Federal Government to promote education in a variety of ways. It has been promoting education ever since 1785. Not a session of Congress closes without the passage of acts designed to promote education. To be sure, these acts are for the most part in harmony with precedents already established, but new precedents are constantly being set. On the other hand, for Congress to attempt to usurp the sovereign right of each state to organize, supervise, and administer education within its own borders and specifically and directly for the state's own citizens would clearly be unconstitutional. It is, indeed, unthinkable. Congress has never attempted to do this. It has never been advised or memorialized by educational leaders to attempt it. No one desires this sort of thing to be done; but there are many who feel that the co-operative relationships already established, already justified by their results, should be extended to include educational needs and activities even more important to the welfare of the Nation than those with which the Government has hitherto concerned itself. If Federal co-operation in education can work the miracles which now stand to its credit, and if it can do this without invading in any respect the rights of the states, it can work other sadly needed miracles with the same efficiency and the same freedom from danger [pp. 105-6].

<sup>1</sup> JOHN A. H. KEITH and WILLIAM C. BAGLEY, *The Nation and The Schools*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1920. Pp. xvii+364.